

Wilderness News Release Template

News releases can be written to publicize specific events or occurrences such as educational seminars, wilderness anniversary celebrations, or natural happenings related to park-specific wilderness. Such news releases produced for distribution to newspapers and other periodicals provide an opportunity to deliver a park-specific wilderness message to diverse audiences throughout broad geographical regions. Use the following guidelines to maintain a consistent Servicewide wilderness message when you produce a news release about your park wilderness.

News Release Goal and Objectives

Goal: To increase public knowledge of an event or occurrence regarding park-specific wilderness.

Objectives:

1. Define wilderness according to the Wilderness Act (1964).
2. Explain that specific areas in some National Park Service locations are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
3. Explain what differentiates wilderness areas from other public lands.
4. Identify tangible and/or intangible benefits of wilderness (e.g., watershed, habitat for wildlife including threatened and endangered plants and animals, “living laboratory,” baseline “control” research area, preservation of cultural artifacts and historic landscape, renewal of human spirit, escape for humans from mechanized/technological society, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, local significance, revenue for local communities, scenic beauty, connection to American history, preserved for future generations to enjoy and make decisions about, etc.)

Further Guidance

- Relate news release to the National Park Service mission.
- Address current resource issues.
- Provide park contact information.

NPS Mission Statement: The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and intrinsic values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation, and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Sample News Release

This is a sample news release distributed by Shenandoah National Park to celebrate 25 years of designated wilderness in the park.

Shenandoah Celebrates 25 Years of Designated Wilderness With Special Programs

Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Douglas Morris invites the public to share in the celebration of 25 years of wilderness in Shenandoah National Park by attending a special program during “Wilderness Weekend,” October 19-21. According to Morris, “This is an anniversary weekend: October 20, 2001, marks the signing of legislation that designated 40 percent of Shenandoah National Park as wilderness.”

Wilderness is recognized by the Wilderness Act as “an area where earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man . . .” Wilderness areas are managed for primitive recreation where there are no permanent developments such as roads or paved trails. By designating

wilderness in Shenandoah, Congress added Shenandoah to the National Wilderness Preservation System that was established by the Wilderness Act in 1964.

In the United States' densely populated East, areas preserved as wilderness take on a special meaning. They are sanctuaries for human renewal, habitat for threatened animals, sites for research, and reservoirs for clean, free-flowing water. Shenandoah's wilderness area has the imprint of past and present human use. Old stone walls, freestanding chimneys, and trails following former roadbeds can be discovered and explored. Today, this area with its natural and cultural resources has the highest conservation protection Americans can give their public lands.

"Wilderness areas are special places that provide unique opportunities for personal renewal and reconnection," Morris added. "Come celebrate Shenandoah's wilderness by attending a ranger-led program, enjoying solitude in the wilderness, or overlooking views of wilderness areas from Skyline Drive."

Special programs related to wilderness begin Friday night (10/19) and continue through Sunday afternoon (10/21) and vary from guest speakers to guided hikes in wilderness areas. All "Wilderness Weekend" events are offered free of charge, though some programs require advance registration.

For a list of "Wilderness Weekend" events, visit the Shenandoah National Park website at www.nps.gov/shen. To register for programs, call 540-999-3489.

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